



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2004

Contact: Stephanie Lundberg
Phone: 202-225-5506

Kind Pays Tribute to Upper Mississippi Grand Excursion

Fights for Environmental Management Program; Advocates for President recommended funds

Washington, DC —As co-chair of the Upper Mississippi Task Force, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) led the bipartisan fight today in the House of Representatives to increase funding for the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (EMP) to \$28 million, the level recommended by the President in the FY 2005 budget. The House Energy and Water Appropriations bill includes \$16 million, \$3 million less than last year's funding and \$12 million shy of the President's recommendation.

"The EMP serves as a national model for the evaluation and enhancement of river ecosystems, and it has come to be recognized as the single most important effort committed to ensuring the vitality of the Upper Mississippi River System," said Kind. "In light of the 150th anniversary of the Grand Excursion celebrating the important role of the river in the development of middle-America, we should be doing everything we can to see to it that this national treasure is preserved for another 150 years and then some."

The EMP, authorized by the 1986 Water Resource Development Act, is designed to evaluate, restore and enhance river and wetland habitats along a 1200-mile stretch of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Managed by the Army Corps of Engineers in cooperation with the Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Geological Survey, the EMP is one of the nation's most effective habitat restoration programs.

"The program has suffered major setbacks, however, due to inadequate funding in recent years," stated Kind. "I, along with a bipartisan coalition of my colleagues, effectively urged the President to recognize the need to increase the funding for the EMP so significant progress can be made in both the long-term monitoring and habitat restoration plans of one of our country's most valuable treasures."

Kind has been the leading supporter of the EMP since he was elected to Congress in 1996. As founder and co-chair of the Upper Mississippi River Congressional Task Force, Kind has been active in promoting the vast benefits of the EMP in Congress and has consistently advocated for full level funding.